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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 001236

SIPDIS

EUR/NCE FOR FICHTE, PM/RSAT FOR GOROG, BONFANTE, AND
BLOCKAGE, PM/DTCC FOR PEARTREE, H FOR BORIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2015

TAGS: [KOMC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH ASSAULT RIFLES TO GO TO THE U.S., POSSIBLY
IN REDUCED NUMBERS

REF: A. STATE 154675

1B. PRAGUE 1167

Classified By: Political-Military Officer Brian Greaney
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1) (C) Summary: Embassy Prague has notified the GOCR of BAFTE's confirmation that its International Import Certificate for up to 20,000 VZ-58 assault rifles remains valid. The Czech MFA licensing division will give its approval for the deal Aug 23. The arms supplier, citing negotiations with the GOCR, says it will now export "only" 3,600 rifles. End Summary.

2) (C) Pol-Mil Off Aug 23 notified the MFA that BAFTE has confirmed its import permit (for up to 20,000 VZ-58 assault rifles) remains valid until September 18, 2005 (Ref A). The rifles are destined for conversion to semiautomatic and eventual sale to U.S. consumers (Ref B). The MFA contact expressed thanks for the information, mentioning that the Czech arms exporter had placed him under significant pressure to issue a permit. The Czech MFA remains interested in staying current on new U.S. law and policy in regard to future weapons transfers.

3) (C) A representative of arms supplier Ceska Zbrojovka told the Embassy August 23rd that, due to reluctance on the part of the GOCR, the company had been unable to negotiate permission to export more than 3,600 of the assault rifles to the United States. Our contact said Ceska Zbrojovka plans to export this number of rifles in advance of the September 18th deadline.

4) (C) Comment: It appears that, even with confirmation of the validity of the U.S. International Import Certificate for this deal, the GOCR is uncomfortable with the plan to export 10,000 assault rifles to the U.S. If the 3,600 figure turns out to be accurate, it is possible that this is a compromise between proponents of the deal and officials who fear that any future consequences of such a transfer would be partially blamed on the Czech Republic. End comment.

5) (U) Post would like to thank all those involved in providing a timely and detailed USG response.
MUNTER